

# Victim's parents sue Cal

FEB 5 1993

FROM STAFF REPORTS

OAKLAND — The parents of a University of California, Berkeley student murdered in a dormitory last year have filed a lawsuit against the university, claiming that the lack of dorm security was to blame for the death.

Grace Rualo Asuncion, 20, was stabbed to death last Feb. 7 in the Pilipino-American Alliance office of Eshleman Hall. Her murder remains unsolved, and UC Berkeley police have not located any witnesses to the crime.

Asuncion's parents, Edward and Aida Asuncion, who live in the Los Angeles area, filed the lawsuit Tuesday in Alameda County Superior Court. The suit claims the university's Board of Regents made Asuncion's death "foreseeable" by leaving Eschleman Hall unlocked, unsecured and accessible to "street people" who slept there at night.

Edwin Caldwell, an attorney for the Asuncions, said the family is asking for \$1 million in damages.

Mike Alva, a spokesman at the University president's office, said the university had not seen the lawsuit and could not comment.

# Female student stabbed to death on UC campus

SUN FEB - 9 1992

By Marina Gottschalk  
Tribune staff writer

BERKELEY — University of California police are investigating the murder of a 20-year-old female student in Eshleman Hall Friday night.

Grace Rualo Asuncion was stabbed multiple times with a sharp object, said UC-Berkeley police Lt. Pat Carroll.

The weapon has not been found, he said.

There was no evidence of sexual assault nor were there signs of a serious struggle prior to Asuncion's death, Carroll said after an autopsy yesterday. Robbery also did not appear to be a motive, he said.

"Everything that is supposed to be in her purse appears to be there," Carroll said.

"We have no suspect or motive," he said.

"We're interviewing friends, family and witnesses," said Carroll.

Meanwhile, yesterday as word of the murder spread across campus, some students said they were shocked by the murder, while others said, given the city's high crime rate, they were not surprised.

"What can we say. We're speechless. This is pretty bad," said Cal student Mohamad Rafati.

The 20-year-old junior said that he and his sister were robbed at gunpoint near campus last semester. "After what happened at Henry's bar, the fire, and the fact that we got robbed, it's clear that this is not a safe place to go to school."

Billy Gordon, 26, said that his roommate treated a man after he was stabbed near campus on a Saturday afternoon. "It's really bad, but it almost doesn't surprise me," he said about the murder. "I ride my bike around, but I don't ride on campus at night. It's not safe, and I let people know it's not safe," said the graduate student.

Some students said that it

wasn't the violence that surprised them, but instead where it occurred.

"I can't say that I'm shocked, because things like this always happen, but I didn't expect them to find anyone dead in a building, ever," said 19-year-old sophomore Cassandra Gual.

Nineteen-year-old freshman Naomi Rabbi said that before she heard about Friday's murder, she "wouldn't think twice about wandering around campus between 5 and 9 p.m., especially in a building."

A custodian found Asuncion's body about 9:20 p.m. in the Filipino-American Alliance office on the fifth floor of Eshleman Hall and called police, Carroll said.

Police immediately closed off the building to search for clues.

Other people were in the building at the time but police have not been able to locate any witnesses who saw anything, said Carroll.

Asuncion, from Agoura Hills in Southern California, was a junior majoring in molecular and cell biology.

She was affiliated with the Filipino-American Alliance and had studied before in the office, said Carroll.

Asuncion was last seen in the office about 5 p.m. witnesses told police, Carroll said.

The slight woman, who had long, dark hair, was wearing blue jeans, a white sweatshirt and white canvas shoes.

Eshleman Hall primarily houses offices of the student government and student organizations, said Jesus Mena, a UC-Berkeley spokesman.

The building is located at the corner of Telegraph Avenue and Bancroft Way next to the Associated Student Union Cooperative.

The building remained closed yesterday while police were investigating the murder. It was expected to be opened at noon.

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today, except for the fifth floor, Mena said.

The building is normally locked at midnight and re-opened at 7 a.m. on weekdays and opened at noon on Sunday, Mena said.

At one time the building was open 24 hours a day, but the student senate several years ago decided to change the hours for safety reasons, Mena said.

Asuncion lived near the campus with a roommate, but not in campus housing, Carroll said.

The last murder on campus involving a student occurred in 1975 when a young woman walking through the eucalyptus grove on the north side of the campus was kidnapped and beaten to death, Mena said.

In 1980, a murder-suicide involving a husband and wife occurred in the Smythe-Fernwald

campus off Piedmont Avenue, he said.

The body of a street person was found in Strawberry Creek on Jan. 1, 1991, he said.

Carroll said Asuncion's murder would probably create feelings of fear on the campus and noted that there is a night escort walking service and a night shuttle service. Staff will be added to the escort service because of expected increased demand, he said.

Arrangements for the escort service may be made by calling 642-WALK.

Anyone who may have been in the area of Eshleman Hall between 5 p.m. and 9 p.m. Friday and may have seen Asuncion or anything suspicious is asked to call UC-Berkeley police at 642-6760.

— **Tribune staff writers Katherine Corcoran and Daniel Vasquez contributed to this report.**

# Memorial for slain Cal junior

MON FEB 10 1992

By Janet Byron  
Tribune staff writer

BERKELEY — As police continued their search for clues to the brutal slaying of a University of California junior, friends and relatives yesterday remembered her at an emotional memorial service.

Grace Rualo Asuncion, 20, was found stabbed to death at 9:20 p.m. Friday night. She had been studying alone in Room 509 of Eshleman Hall, the on-campus offices of the Pilipino American Alliance, police said.

"We have not yet established a motive," UC police detective John Lightfoot said last night. "But there are quite a few details I am not at liberty to discuss."

Lightfoot said that he had "absolutely no evidence or reason to believe" that the killing was politically or ethnically motivated. Nor did Asuncion have a steady boyfriend at the time of the slaying, police said.

Asuncion was last seen at 5 p.m. following a

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meeting of the alliance, which is a support organization for Filipino-American students.

"The time between 5 and 5:30 p.m. is of particular interest to us now," said Lt. Pat Carroll, urging anyone who was in the building that night to contact police.

There were no signs of robbery or sexual assault, and it did not appear there had been a struggle, police said.

As police continued to comb Eshleman Hall for clues, more than 300 friends and relatives of Asuncion attended a tearful Mass at Newman Hall on College Avenue near campus.

"We come together at a time of confusion, feeling very much overwhelmed by the death of this soul, so unexpectedly, and someone so young," Pastor Carlo Busby told the mourners.

Charity Camaddo, Asuncion's roommate, lovingly described her as a determined young woman who was devoted to her family and friends, and spent many hours counseling fellow Filipino-American students.

"Grace tried to tell people



**Grace Asuncion**  
*Lovingly remembered*

that their problems are really small and that friends and family are what's important," Camaddo said. "She believed in love. She loved to have people around. She loved to laugh."

Asuncion, who grew up in Agoura Hills near Los Angeles, was majoring in molecular and cell biology. She wanted to be a sports doctor or orthopedist, said her father, Edward Asuncion.

Grace Asuncion's family — her father; mother, Aida; and siblings Mark, John and Danielle — stood in front of the assembly to graciously thank her friends, many of whom were in tears.

"Now I know why she liked

Berkeley so much. She always wanted to go back," Aida Asuncion said. "Thank you for being nice to her and making her happy — these were the happiest days of her life."

Police and university officials were expected to reopen Eshleman Hall today.

They said identification will be checked, and guards will be posted inside the building at night.

Located on Bancroft Way at Telegraph Avenue, Eshleman Hall houses offices for a number of student organizations. Many students said they enjoy studying in its seventh-floor library because food is allowed.

"It's usually crowded all the time, especially during the evenings," said junior Angela Pruitt, who said she won't return any time soon.

Senior Elaine Tsang said she often studies in Eshleman Hall at night.

The campus "is pretty dangerous in general," Tsang said. "But you don't really think about it until disaster strikes."



# Cal building reopens under tight security

WED FEB 12 1992

By Robert J. Lopez  
Tribune staff writer

**BERKELEY** — Eshleman Hall, the scene of a grisly stabbing death of a University of California student last week, reopened yesterday under tight security.

Three private guards stood watch at the building entrance, allowing only students, faculty, staff and their guests inside. The hall had been closed since Friday night when a janitor found the body of 20-year-old Grace Asuncion.

She was sitting on the floor with her head leaning back against a small sofa, stab wounds across her neck, authorities said yesterday.

Also yesterday, police said they had made no arrests and were still investigating leads.

At a news conference yesterday, students called for more security on campus.

"One of the shocking things about Grace's death is that it took place in a campus building that is a 'home away from home' for many students," said Rachel

Settlage.

Undergraduate President Mark Yablonovich said the student government would present recommendations to Chancellor Chang-Lin Tien for more safety patrols, more self-defense classes, safety films and other measures.

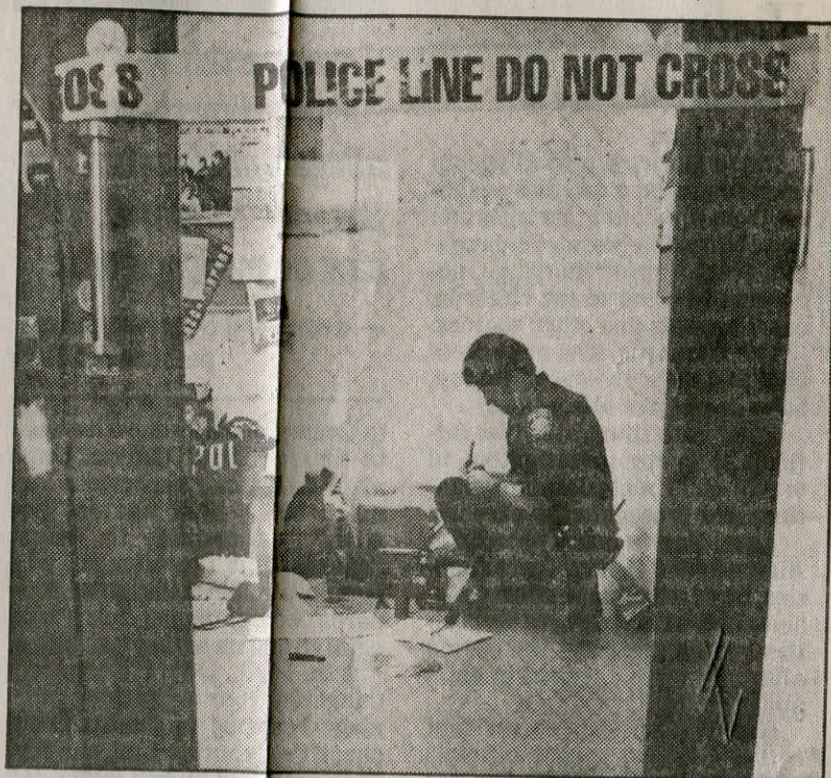
"Safety must be our No. 1 priority," he said.

UC-Berkeley spokesman Jesus Mena yesterday said officials have already begun a number of programs recommended recently by a campus safety committee.

"Safety is a high priority," he said.

Mena said the security guards would remain at Eshleman Hall while UC-Berkeley officials review building safety procedures. The room where Asuncion was found, headquarters for the student Pilipino American Alliance, will remain closed for the rest of the year.

Today on campus students are



By Gary Reyes/Oakland Tribune

**UC officer Rick McAllaster gathers evidence at Eshleman Hall.**

scheduled to gather at 10 a.m. at the foot of Sather Tower to observe a moment of silence in memory of Asuncion. UC-Berkeley police, meanwhile, have assigned five officers to the case and were busy yesterday con-

ducting interviews.

"We're still getting people coming to us with information," said Lt. William Foley. "We're putting the pieces together."

Anyone with information is asked to call police at 642-6760.

THU FEB 13 1992

## Reward offered in Cal slaying

University of California at Berkeley Chancellor Chang-Lin Tien is offering a \$5,000 reward for any information leading to the arrest and conviction of the person or persons responsible for the murder of student Grace Rualo Asuncion.

Anyone with information is asked to call 642-0472 between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. or 642-6762 24 hours a day.

Asuncion, a 20-year-old junior, was found stabbed to death last Friday by a janitor in Eshleman Hall.



## BERKELEY

TUE FEB 25 1992

### Police seek potential witness in UC murder

Police at the University of California are looking for a potential witness who was seen taking an elevator from a basement to the upper floors of a campus building around the time a 20-year-old student was murdered on Feb. 7.

The witness is described as a clean-shaven Asian man, possibly Filipino, in his 20s, and about 5-feet, 7-inches tall. The witness, who officials say "looked like a student," was wearing black jeans and a jacket. Police said he is not a suspect but may have clues to the mysterious murder of Grace Rualo Asuncion, who was found stabbed to death in Eshleman Hall.

Officials are also offering a \$5,000 reward for any information leading to the arrest and conviction of the attacker.

Anyone with information is asked to call 642-0472 or 642-6760. UC-Berkeley detectives are collaborating with Berkeley police and the FBI on the case.



TUE APR 21 1992

## Police still seeking leads in UC slaying

Several members of the Pilipino Student Alliance were on the fifth floor of Eshleman Hall at the time that University of California junior Grace Rualo Asuncion was killed Feb. 7, police said.

Police yesterday released new information on the case in hopes of obtaining new leads.

Meanwhile, UC-Berkeley Chancellor Chang-Lin Tien authorized the University to increase the reward for informa-



Grace Asuncion

tion leading to the arrest and conviction of the person responsible for Asuncion's death from \$5,000 to \$15,000.

On Friday evening, Feb. 7, Asuncion, 20, was found dead of stab wounds to the neck in a small office of Eshleman Hall. UC police have determined that the murder took place between 5 p.m. and 5:30 p.m.

Asuncion had been meeting with other members of the Pilipino American Alliance. After the meeting ended, just before 5 p.m., Asuncion told the others she had to use the phone to make calls to order a birthday cake for a friend.

University police say that at the time of the murder, many other students, staff and employees were in the building, and it is very likely someone heard or saw something, but doesn't realize its significance.

Police are also still looking for an apparent witness, a Filipino man who, according to police, took the elevator that night at 4:45 p.m. Police are urging anyone with information to call (510) 642-0472.

# Plantings for slain student

FRI OCT - 2 1992

Diana S. Kim  
Tribune staff writer

BERKELEY — A flowering cherry tree will be planted Sunday at UC-Berkeley in memory of a young woman killed while studying alone in Eshleman Hall eight months ago.

The public ceremony to honor Grace Rualo Asuncion will begin at 9 a.m. in the grassy area just west of Eshleman Hall facing Bancroft Way on the University of California Berkley campus.

Speakers will include Chancellor Chang-Lin Tien, Vice Chancellor for Undergraduate Affairs W. Russell Ellis Jr., a representative of the Philippines Consul General and a member of the Pilipino American Alliance.

Asuncion's parents of Agoura Hills near Los Angeles will also attend.

Eight months ago, a janitor found the body of the 20-year-old junior in the fifth floor office of the Pilipino American Alliance, a support organization for Filipino-American students.

She was sitting on the floor with her head leaning back against a small sofa, stab wounds across her neck, authorities said.

Asuncion reportedly had been meeting with other members of the alliance that night. After the meeting ended, just before 5 p.m., Asuncion told the others she had to use the phone to make calls to order a birthday cake for a friend.

Police said there were no signs of robbery or sexual assault, or of a struggle.

At the mass for Asuncion a few days after her death, Charity Camaddo, Asuncion's roommate, lovingly described her as a determined young woman who was devoted to her family and friends, and spent many hours counseling fellow Filipino American friends.

"Grace tried to tell people that their problems are really small and that friends and family are what's important," Camaddo said. "She believed in love. She loved to have people around. She loved to laugh."

The investigation of Asuncion's death is still open.



# Family, UC chancellor remember slain student

MON OCT - 5 1992

By Harry Harris  
Tribune staff writer

BERKELEY — Grace Rualo Asuncion would have been 21 today, a time of joyous expectation for the aspiring doctor who thrived on making other people's lives better.

Instead, there was a somber ceremony in her memory yesterday — a time for tears and sorrow.

The occasion was the planting of a young cherry tree in her memory next to Eshelman Hall on the University of California campus. It was in a fifth-floor office of the Pilipino American Alliance where Asuncion, a junior at the university, was stabbed to death Feb. 7 by an attacker still being sought.

UC Chancellor Chang-Lin Tien said the tree commemorates not only "Grace's

life, but her strength, her laughter, her intelligence and her deep commitment to her family, friends and society. Her warm spirit will always inspire us."

Asuncion's death, he told the 70 family members and friends present, will "remind us of the importance of creating a society where each one lives free of fear ... where we are unafraid to pursue our dreams."

At the ceremony were Asuncion's parents, Ed and Aida Asuncion, of Agoura Hills in Southern California, her brother, Mark, her sister, Danielle, and her grandmother, Donatilo Rualo. They left birthday cards in the tree's branches.

Ed Asuncion said the family was grateful, "knowing we have your support,

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the university's support and things like this that keep the memory of Grace alive."

Earlier he and his wife said their oldest daughter was deeply missed.

"Just being there for us," her mother said. "She had a very special bond with me and her father. I miss her thoughtfulness the most. She never failed to call me on special days, like my birthday or anniversary. She was very loving and caring."

Her mother said Asuncion was also very proud of her heritage and interested in learning about it. She said her daughter wanted to be a sports medicine doctor for several reasons. Besides having family members who were doctors, she was impressed with her treatment when she was injured running

cross-country and thought "that was a way she could help people," her mother said.

"She could have done a lot for this world and now she can't."

Both parents said they were still going through myriad emotions, from anger to puzzlement, about her death. "What could my daughter possibly have done?" her mother asked.

They hope the killer will soon be caught to ease some of their pain. "Grace cannot come back again but (an arrest) will ease our feelings of suffering," her father said.

University police said they have not ruled out the suspicion that Asuncion was killed by someone she knew. Detective John Lightfoot said so far more than 200 people have been interviewed.

Local FBI psychological pro-

filers, working with the bureau's Behavioral Science Unit in Virginia, believe they know some characteristics of the killer.

When the killer thinks back about the slaying, it is an "almost dreamlike" experience, a profiler said. He or she may even pretend it never happened.

Since the killing, the person has had problems dealing with the death. The person probably has had loss of sleep, bouts of anxiety or depression and feelings of regret and sadness as well as an inability to concentrate that could be noticeable to others, the profilers said.

The problems the suspect has coping with the death will not go away and "will haunt the person," the profilers said.

Authorities believe the killer may have gone to Eshleman Hall to confront Asuncion about

something and "things got out of hand and ended up in a way the offender didn't anticipate." If Asuncion knew the attacker, she may have even liked the person, felt no reason to be threatened or may not have known the person was angry with her.

Authorities said that, if people have an idea who is responsible but are keeping silent, "they have to know that by keeping the identity secret they are not helping this person."

If the right set of stressful circumstances occur in the future, the person might hurt someone again, authorities said.

A \$15,000 reward posted by the university remains in effect.

Anyone with information, including those who wish to remain anonymous, can call police at 642-0472.